## EMBRACING THE SEA

 $\boldsymbol{A}$ s descendents of ancient Polynesian seafarers, early Hawaiians developed a way of life closely connected to Hawai'i's ocean environment. To this day, many Native Hawaiians embrace the sea and its creatures, such as the  $kohol\bar{a}$  (humpback whale), through unique cultural practices and traditions. The Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary works to affirm these unique ocean-based elements of Hawaiian culture through special education and outreach activities. By doing this, the sanctuary strives to enhance the survival of North Pacific humpback whales and the ocean-based, conservation-oriented culture of Native Hawaiians.



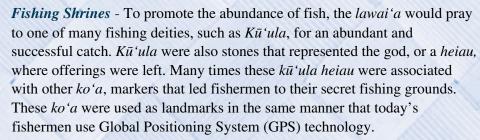
Legendary Areas of the Koholā - During the winter, Hawai'i's waters take on a new energy as the koholā return to their breeding and calving grounds. Natives acknowledged their presence through legendary place names throughout the islands. For example, Koholālele meaning "leaping whale," refers to locations along the Hāmākua coast of Hawai'i and at Līhu'e, Kaua'i. Laeonākoholā on Kaho'olawe refers to the "cape of whales." Pu'ukoholā Heiau, one of Hawai'i's largest heiau (temples), was built upon "whale hill." Built in the 1790's under the direction of Kamehameha I, this heiau played an important role in his subsequent rise to power as the ruler of all Hawai'i.

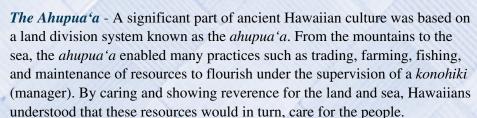


Hawaiian Voyagers - Centuries ago, Hawai'i's ancestors voyaged vast distances across the Pacific, resulting in the development of a unique culture. Voyagers were accomplished observers of their natural surroundings, using the clouds, winds, stars, and currents to guide them safely to their destinations. Voyaging between islands and across the Pacific allowed Hawaiians to explore, trade and transport materials. Today, new generations explore their ancestral culture as traditional canoes set sail in remembrance of Hawai'i's voyagers.



*Master Fishermen* - For centuries in Hawai'i, entire families were devoted to mastering the art of fishing. Ancient Hawaiian fishing traditions are still seen today as *lawai'a* (fishermen) use hooks, lines, and spears to fish during the day, and torches to fish at night. *Limu* (seaweed) and other resources are also gathered along the shorelines.





Unique Fishponds - The islands' shorelines were once decorated by a lacework of rock-walled fishponds. These ponds evolved from an earlier form of Polynesian aquaculture into the *loko kuapā* style which is unique to Hawai'i. Encompassing shallow coastal waters up to the shoreline, the *kuapā* (rock wall) enclosed an area of water in which Hawaiians could manage and raise fish. A *mākāhā* (sluice gate) allowed small fish to enter and prevented larger fish from escaping.



Toothed Whales and the Lei Niho Palaoa - Besides the koholā, palaoa (toothed whales) also frequent Hawai'i's waters. It is believed that when the carcass of a toothed whale, such as the sperm whale, washed ashore, it became kapu (taboo) and was reserved only for the ali'i (ruling class). From this carcass, the niho (tooth) was extracted, carved and made into a whale tooth necklace known as the lei niho palaoa. This lei, rare in form and structure, was an intricately woven necklace of human hair with the carved whale's tooth hanging as a pendant.



The Life of the Sea - When Hawaiians gazed upon the sea, they viewed all forms of sea life as i'a. From the limu to the koholā, from the wana (sea urchins) to the manō (sharks), many i'a were sacred and revered as 'aumākua. An 'aumākua is believed to be the spirit of a family ancestor that assumes the shape of an animal such as the manō, he'e (octopus), honu (turtles), and others. These 'aumākua protected the families, who in turn, cared for the animals. 'Aumākua are still honored today, as Hawaiian families pass on the knowledge, practices and traditions of their kūpuna (elders).



## HAWAIIAN ISLANDS HUMPBACK WHALE NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY



Facilitating Native Hawaiian Ocean Uses, Traditions and Practices



About the Artist: Brook Kapūkuniahi Parker has been an artist for over 30 years and enjoys expressing his love for the Hawaiian culture. During this time, he has created artwork for many organizations including children's book illustrations for 'Aha Pūnana L (Hawaiian Immersion School Program), the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and Hilo, and many other projects throughout the yea He used colored pencils and marking pens to create this brilliant artwork for the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary

http://hawaiihumpbackwhale.noaa.gov